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CENTER SCENE

The Bureau of Land Management Service Center Newsletter *March 1987*

SCD/Ace Skier

In January I went on a three-day cross-country ski trip on the Tenth Mountain Trail with my son, Tyler, and Glenwood Springs Area Manager, Jim Owings. The Trail, which will eventually extend from Aspen to Vail, is currently completed from Aspen to Yeoman Park, about 40 miles. We skied about 23 miles from Aspen to the Diamond J Ranch on the Fryingpan River.

It was rugged back-country skiing. We carried large backpacks, used heavy mountain touring equipment, and skied up and down the Trail at elevations from 8,000 to 11,000 feet. The Trail avoids avalanche areas and is well designed for ski touring.

At night we stayed in very comfortable cabins which are called huts. They are spaced a day's travel apart along the Trail and require reservations several months in advance. The huts have wood stoves for cooking and heating, kitchen equipment and supplies, bunks with foam mattresses, and electric lights that run on solar cells. Water is obtained by melting snow on the wood stove. Each night we shared our hut with a group of six other skiers from Wisconsin. The huts really made the trip more enjoyable, particularly with temperatures down to -12°F.

I had fun on the trip and look forward to doing another one. As you might suspect, I enjoy sharing the experience with others — just ask me about it.

(by Bob Moore, SCD)

It Works Most of the Time

Do you use a terminal in your work? Do you access the DPS 8/70, Level-6, or PAY/PERS? Do you know the route taken to connect the terminal to the computer? Do you care?

Basically a terminal (PC is included in the generic terminal group) accesses a computer either by a MODEM or by being hardwired to the local SC network. A modem is a device that allows a terminal to access a computer or another terminal over a telephone line. Presently you can dial a modem in the SC communications center and access the DPS 8/70 and PAY/PERS systems. The terminals can operate at either 300 Bits Per Second (BPS), or 1200 BPS. There are six rotaries at the SC. A rotary is a grouping of telephone lines, in this example connected to modems, which allows a terminal user to dial the first number on the rotary and the rotary will connect the caller to the first free line (modem) on the rotary. If all of the lines on the rotary are busy, the caller will get a busy signal and must call back or call another rotary. Three rotaries allow TTY, OMRON, PC, and VIP 7200 terminals to access the DPS 8/70, two at 1200 BPS and one at 300 BPS. One rotary allows VIP-7800, Tandberg, and PCs with VIP emulation software to access the DPS 8/70. The other two rotaries access the PAY/PERS system one at 1200 BPS and 300 BPS.

If a terminal in Building 50 is hardwired to the SC local network and accesses the DPS 8/70, Level-6, or PAY/PERS, it is either connected directly to the Level-6 or to one of two multiplexers in Building 50. A multiplexer is a communication device that allows multiple terminals to use a common telephone line to access a distant location. Why use a multiplexer? The major reason is to save communication costs. Another reason is to reduce the chance of transmission errors over long distance.

Terminals that are connected directly to the Level-6 can only access the Level-6 and the DPS 8/70. Terminals on the multiplexers have other options but that's another story.

If none of this makes any sense or if the terminal you use doesn't work, call the SC communication center on extension 4760 for an explanation.

From FWP

If you are a GS-9 or below how can you improve your career prospects? Be a "calculating person," says Lee Allen of the Division of Personnel.

In a workshop March 18, presented by the Federal Women's Program, Lee will discuss how employees can make calculated moves and take calculated risks to enhance their career development.

With the topic, "I know what I want, but how do I get there," Lee will explain requirements of various career ladders at the SC, in the field, and other agencies. He will explain how employees can use bridge positions to achieve their goals.

He will also cover mobility in relationship to obtaining career goals, and risk taking. Be calculating. Be there!

Farmington Project

Just what is this Farmington Demonstration Project (FDP) that people keep talking about? And what does it have to do with the SC? It's BLM's opportunity to evaluate automated methods which combine our records system with current resource-oriented GIS technology as well as geographic coordinates. This Project utilizes actual field settings to test many of the major issues that will later be addressed by the ALMRS/GIS systems.

To limit the scope of the Demonstration, the Application for Permit to Drill (ADP) process was chosen as the vehicle to show the integration of records, resources, and coordinates. Farmington Resource Area was a perfect choice for APD modernization since it leads the nation in oil and gas well applications.

The FDP was formally approved in March 1986. Since then, specialists from throughout BLM have been working to create a system for ADPs which combines the best of high-tech automated and time-honored manual techniques.

The SC has been instrumental in the progress of the Farmington Project. Judy Bright is the liaison between the Service Center and New Mexico, with the responsibility of integrating all design features of the Demonstration system. Others on the staff have participated on the design team; formulated screens to be used in the eventual Farmington system; completed budgets; and written the Plan which formed the foundation for the entire project.

The FDP will give the ALMRS/GIS Project Office the opportunity to evaluate many technical issues that will ultimately affect a future Lands Information System. The Project is scheduled for a formal demonstration in late Summer.

W-4 Folly

The Secretary of the Treasury has directed the Internal Revenue Service to simplify the new W-4 Form. We propose that the revised W-4 (Second edition) incorporate the following "Worksheet to Figure Your Withholding Allowances:"

1. Enter "1" for yourself or enter "2" if you have a split personality.
2. Enter "1" for your louse.
3. Enter number of resident bedbugs.
4. Other dependents: Enter number of alligators residing in your bathtub.
5. Golden Years Allowance: Enter "1" if you were born during the 19th century. Enter "2" if you were born during the 18th century.
6. Disability Liability: Enter one exemption for each hangnail on either your right hand (if conservative) or your left hand (if liberal).
7. Special Allowance: Enter "1" if your initials are identical to those of Irate Ragamuffin Stinkweed.
8. Bonus Allowance: Enter "2" if your date of birth falls on the national holiday generally observed on April 15.
9. a) Gastro-Intestinal Allowance: Enter number of ounces of anchovies consumed on your average pizza. b) Exclusion: Enter number of antacids consumed per anchovy pizza. Subtract line 9b from 9a. Enter the result.
10. a) Income Allowance: Enter gross amount of clams earned during tax year.
    b) Enter total number of hairs on your head or your hairpiece if bald.

(Note: Your count may be subject to a physical verification in accordance with the Privacy Act and generally accepted auditing standards.)

Divide 10a by 10b. Enter the result rounded to the nearest whole number.

11. Add lines 1 through 10. Enter the total.
12. Infallible IRS total (if you have claimed more than the IRS total, you have engaged in fraud. Go straight to jail, do not pass GO, and do not collect $200 bond money).[o]

(by Michael Kluherz)

Seriously... training will be offered soon on preparation of the real W-4. Watch for it.

Visit the Library

Why is there such high turnover among ADP professionals in industry and government? What are the mineral resources of San Bernardino, CA? How much damage are black bears doing to trees in the Pacific Northwest?

These are examples of reference questions BLM's main library here at the SC handles. In a typical year, the staff answers about 5,800 reference questions, locates 5,000 interlibrary loan items around the world, and performs 530 searches using over 400 databases.

BLM field offices generate 70-75% of the library's business. The remaining 25-30% comes from the SC, the general public, and other libraries. Requests for service doubled each year from 1982 to 1984 and are currently increasing at a rate of 75% a year!

The library has about 36,000 books and 470 journals and a number of legal research tools including the *U.S. Code*, *Code of Federal Regulations*, and *U.S. Statutes*.

One of the most interesting and useful services provided is the automated cataloging system. This system puts the collections of 6,000 to 7,000 libraries at the disposal of BLM employees, who can borrow materials from the Library of Congress and most major research university libraries. These libraries, in turn, can access our collection. In the past few months, requests from the British Lending Library and the National Library of Switzerland have been filled.

Requests for interlibrary loans are handled electronically, eliminating mailing time and other delays previously encountered. Thanks to the world's libraries being part of the computer age, requests can often be filled in a week or less.

"The library staff has a strong commitment to the concept that better use of information leads to better decisions," notes Sandy Bowers, Chief Librarian here at the SC. "If BLM employees fully utilize the capabilities of automated information retrieval at their disposal, we can manage more efficiently and effectively."

Next time you have a question, check out the library. They can help.

FERS . . . ??

On January 1, 1987, many of us became part of "FERS," the new Federal Employees' Retirement System. It is a very new approach to federal retirement, quite different from the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) that most of us know.

The goal of FERS was to provide a retirement system that you could take with you to the private sector, including state and local governments; would encourage employees to work longer and to an older age; would cost employees approximately the same as CSRS and provide about the same total annuity; and be totally funded.

Congress met this goal by developing a retirement system composed of three parts: a pension plan, Social Security, and a savings (Thrift) plan. These three work together to meet the goal outlined above.

The pension plan is very similar to CSRS, except that it provides a smaller percentage of the average salary of the employee's highest three years.

Social Security coverage is new for permanent federal employees. It is the same as that for private industry employees and is therefore completely portable to that sector. Retirement under Social Security can start as early as age 62.

The Thrift Plan is a truly new concept for federal employees. Under it, employees can save up to 10% of their salary, have up to 5% matched by the government, and all of it, including interest, is tax deferred. The savings can be rolled over into an IRA or approved pension plan if the employee leaves federal service. Employees also will have a say in the way the savings are invested.

The Division of Personnel will be conducting employee orientation sessions on FERS soon. Watch for announcements on them.

MOSS Workshop

The Fourth Annual MOSS Users Workshop will take place in Denver the week of May 18. Sessions will present techniques, strategies, and mechanisms for the use, development, and management of the MOSS software family. If you would like to give a presentation at the workshop, submit abstracts to Kelly Park at CSU (Telephone 491-6222). For more detailed information contact Jan Poorman (6-0104).

GPO 852 - 977